



Buzz, Body & Bites

A newsletter for actively aging adults

Virginia Cooperative Extension Family & Consumer Sciences

October 2024

Origin of Pumpkins in Halloween and other Tales

No Halloween is complete without the eerie glow of a pumpkin face in the window. This single day has made pumpkin production a booming business. It's doubtful whether large scale pumpkin production would exist without Halloween - pumpkin pie is not that great!

Hollowed-out-pumpkins, called jack-o-lanterns can be traced back to the people in Ireland and England who carved out beets, potatoes, and turnips to use as lanterns on this festive occasion. They were named for a miser named Jack who could not enter heaven and played jokes on the devil.

Fairy tales and legends from America and other countries contain many references to the pumpkin. There is the episode in "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" in which the ghostly character lifts his pumpkin head from the pommel of his saddle and hurls it at the fleeing Ichabod Crane.

In a legend of India, a devoted father used a large pumpkin as a tomb for his only son. In time, the pumpkin was found to be filled with water in which swam a large fish. Intent on harvesting the fish, four brothers lift the pumpkin to carry it away but become frightened and drop it. From the resulting cracks in the pumpkin shell, a flood of water pours out to inundate the earth.

The pumpkin achieved a romantic high when one of its oversized brothers served as a golden coach for Cinderella. It also must have been a sizable pumpkin shell which Peter the Pumpkin Eater confined his wandering wife. Regardless of whether one of the legends or Linus sitting in the pumpkin patch waiting for the "Great Pumpkin" to appear has stimulated the use of pumpkins at Halloween, this overgrown squash that we call a pumpkin is in real demand this time of the year.

From: <https://aggie-hort.tamu.edu/plantanswers/recipes/halloween.html>

HISTORY OF HALLOWEEN

Halloween is a fun and interesting time of year, but do you know the origin of the celebration?

Over 2,000 years ago, the Celts lived in what is now Great Britain, Ireland, and France. They celebrated their new year on November 1st with a festival honoring Samhain, the Celtic Lord of Death. It was believed that Samhain allowed the souls of the dead to return to their earthly homes for this one evening. A large bonfire was lit, sweets were prepared, and many people wore costumes for the celebration.

The Romans conquered the Celts in 43 A.D. and combined Roman autumn festivals with the Celtic festival of Samhain.

Around 800 A.D., the Roman Church started All Saints Day on November 1st. Allhallowmas was the Mass that was said on this day, so in turn, the evening before became known as All Hallowsen or Halloween.

Diane Sutton's Pecan Pumpkin Pie

This recipe combines the best of both pies for a unique twist on a classic Fall dessert.

Source: Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

<https://aggie-hort.tamu.edu/plantanswers/recipes/halloween.html>

Ingredients:

- 3 eggs
- 1 cup of pumpkin (fresh or canned)
- 1/3 cup of sugar
- 1 teaspoon of pumpkin pie spice (alternate: 1 teaspoon cinnamon, 1/4 teaspoon ginger, 1/4 teaspoon cloves, 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg)
- 2/3 cup corn syrup (light)
- 1/2 cup of sugar
- 3 tablespoons of melted oleo
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla
- one cup pecans
- one unbaked nine-inch pie shell.

Instructions:

1. Stir together 1 egg (slightly beaten), pumpkin, 1/3 cup sugar, and the pie spice to make a pumpkin mixture.
2. Spread over bottom of pie shell.
3. Combine two eggs, corn syrup, 1/2 cup sugar, oleo and vanilla. Stir in the pecans. Spoon over pumpkin mixture.
4. Bake at 350 degrees F for 50 minutes or until set.

Fall Prevention Exercise: Wide Leg Stance

1. Start by feet together, standing up straight in a corner or in front of a counter.
2. Pick up your right foot and place it down so that you are standing shoulder width apart.
3. Repeat 10 times and switch to the other side.
4. Try this with your eyes open first. Then, try with your eyes closed. Be sure to have support from a wall or counter.

Resources

Texas A&M Agrilife Extension <https://agriflifeextension.tamu.edu/>

John Hopkins Medicine- Fall Prevention Exercise:

<https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention/fall-prevention-exercises>

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2024

HNFE-1120aNP